5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
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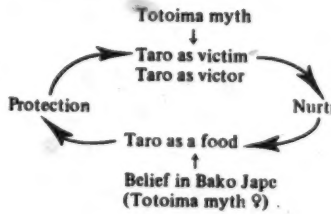
this reconciliation, he sacrifices himself symbolically in the form of his feast taro. But as the myth states, this sacrifice is not a final death. After the feast is over, the feast-giver is more spiritually potent than ever, having obtained the assistance of his own ancestral spirits. He is thus able to overcome his enemies.

Although these ideas are all in some way implicit in gifts of feasting taro, their threatening aspects are kept very much in the background, as the ostensible purpose of the occasion is to establish amity. If the gift represents a display, in very pacific form, of the donor's power, it also offers an opportunity for communion as the recipient consumes food imbued with the spirit of the donor and the donor's spirit thus becomes, as it were, part of him.

At this point we may summarise in a more formal manner the results of our analysis. The insight we have obtained into the meaning of taro gifts suggests that part of the Totoima myth may be represented by the following exchange cycle:

MODEL 18



This diagram does not represent the transaction between Totoima and his son (which has already been analysed in model 5), but rather the transaction between the taro woman (Totoima's daughter) and the man from Managalase. Here the man acted as protector while the woman provided nurture. The man from Managalase is primarily a hunter. He arrives on the scene with a wallaby slung over his arm. When he finds Totoima's son with his innards missing, he replaces these with the innards of the wallaby, thus enabling the son to kill his father. Clearly the meaning is that man, while having nothing but taro inside him, becomes necessarily the victim of the wild pig (Totoima), but when he has meat inside him he becomes strong and able to kill the wild pig. Thus man, by his concern with hunting and the provision of meat, becomes a protector to his wife.

The Managalase is a neighbouring district where the main crop is yam, not taro, though a variety of inferior taro (*pijama*) is grown in small bush clearings. The Managalase magician is therefore in an intermediate position between Totoima and his son. Unlike Totoima he recognises the technology and domestication of taro, but inadequately as he is mainly a hunter. Such, at least, is the Orokaiva view of Managalase.

Taro, for the Orokaiva, is symbolic of strength; it is preferred to other staples because it is believed to build stronger men. The success of an Orokaiva feast is measured principally by the amount of taro that changes hands. It is significant that in the fighting between Orokaiva and Managalase, the former were most often the agressors and the latter the victims of cannibal raids, inroads on

A [See Category 773, p. 64--Analyst]

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824 262 827 [721] hunting territories and the like. Thus the Orokaiva regard themselves as stronger than Managalase (certainly they are more numerous as their fertile land can support a far denser population), which served to show the superiority of taro over yam.

The taro myth discussed above may therefore be recognised as a charter for two contrasting types of taro gift made by Orokaiva. Woman provides cooked taro domestically but man, in providing the raw feasting taro, employs taro as a symbol of fighting strength. Heaped up in the manner of sacrificial victims, they are given to guests, not so much to express commensality as to display and offer for consumption the competitive strength of the donating group.

824 773

4. *A Survey of Taro Gifts*

824 431 125 128 One special interest that taro gifts hold for the field anthropologist is their great frequency which opens the possibility of statistical analysis of a fairly large number of gifts of a fairly homogeneous kind. Twenty-two households were visited daily (or almost daily) providing a record of taro gifts made over twenty-eight days from 31 January to 10 March, 1967. Informants were asked to whom they had sent presents during that day and from whom they had received presents. The survey provided useful incidental information about visitors who had been in the village during the day without my knowledge, and about gifts of objects other than taro. For the purpose of analysis I ignored gifts made to persons not resident in the village, as these were scattered over a great many villages and the survey period was not long enough to establish statistical regularities. Waddell reported that 40 per cent of taro gifts were made to persons outside the village (Sivepe), 10 per cent to villages within one mile of Sivepe, 14 per cent to villages situated between one and two miles from Sivepe, 9 per cent to more distant villages and 6 per cent to expatriate centres. (1968: 218). The statistics compiled by Waddell, however, are in terms of weight rather than the number of gifts. A gift of cooked taro made within a village was for one meal only (averaging perhaps 5 lbs.) while a gift of raw taro made to visitors from other villages or at feasts was more likely to weigh at least 25 lbs. Thus the number of gifts made to persons other than villagers was less than 10 per cent of the total.

As I intend to draw some significant conclusions from the statistics of intra-village taro gifts, it is relevant to describe briefly some difficulties I had in collecting these statistics. The fact that households were asked to report on gifts received as well as gifts made provided an effective check, as ideally all items should have been mentioned twice, once by the donor household and once by the recipient household. People very often forgot to tell me of some of the gifts received and made. Some people were most likely to forget what they had received; others would forget what they had given. If my study had been biased towards psychological anthropology, the frequency of these types of memory lapses among individuals might have given me a basis for establishing a typology of exchange partners. I soon found that nobody claimed gifts they had not actually made or received

From the first day of the survey it became obvious that my questions, simple though they seemed, contained an unexpected ambiguity: should the informant